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ABSTRACT

This book presents two dominant and rival conceptions of quality in higher education. One is based on the expression of the tacit conceptions of value and propriety in the academic community. It is the character and quality of the continuing interactions of higher education's members that are at issue rather than any endpoint or definitive outcome. In the alternative conception, higher education is seen as the issuing of products, with inputs and outputs. In this view, the quality of the system is understood in terms of its "performance" as captured in performance indicators, and effectiveness is assessed in terms of its efficiency. This book clarifies the nature and substance of higher education and quality. It discusses issues concerning quality of higher education, such as performance indicators, fitness for purpose, value added, peer review, total quality management, and academic audit. It then addresses improving the quality of the educational process and grapples with the "student experience," skills in the curriculum, transferable skills, competence, critical thinking, and the idea of the "reflective practitioner." Principles are offered as guidelines for the continuing improvement of the quality of higher education. An appendix presents a schema for an institutional quality audit. (Contains a bibliography of approximately 245 references.) (JDD)

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